

Notes from the August 16, 2004 staff/manager input session in Wausau

Facilitator: Mary Hamel

Notetaker: Barb Hennings

Mary introduced the day's activities by saying that this was an attempt to meet the needs of staff who, after the last input sessions, felt the need to continue the process. As a new facilitator she would do her best to help us identify categories for change. Using issues identified at our past input sessions, she initially provided 7 categories of "problems" and encouraged additions as needed. The seven categories were: Business Process/Activities; Management Systems; Relationships; Staffing; Other Resources; Training/Learning/Building/Experience; Structure (the "Boxes"). Mary provided a process chart that many felt was useful in describing the redesign process so they asked that a copy be placed on the web site.

Deb Pingel explained how she grouped the problems identified in the first internal and external input sessions into six areas: trust, communication, program managing/management, funding/staffing, process, organizational structure. This [needs summary](#) was also posted on the walls along with the problem statement, program mission statement and the criteria, [posters](#) that the redesign team will use to develop a redesigned program.

The group discussed the short time frame for the redesign process, which to some felt almost like a sense of panic. We reviewed Division Administrator Al Shea's reasoning for getting this done in order to meet the next legislative deadline.

Deb answered the question of whether we should address broad issues or specifics by saying that we should look at both. We should look at program activities first and then think about structure. Deb stressed that personnel issues raised in previous sessions were being dealt with in a different venue.

We discussed the need for checks and balances along with ongoing evaluation once the program is redesigned. As an example of when these checks and balances were not used, structural problems that were identified after reorg were not allowed to be addressed. The group suggested that flexibility or checks be added to the criteria. Mary added this to the redesign process chart.

We talked about the perception that 1) the outcome of the redesign is predetermined and 2) the redesign is not so much to improve the program but instead being done for political reasons – that deregulation is being forced on us by the legislature, business, and other special interest groups. Deb noted that Al said he will take steps to pacify industry but will not give up the environment. The reality is that there have been staff reductions and there will be more reductions to staff alone and/or management. As a program, we need to adjust to the realities – to make changes. We need to look at achieving efficiencies with reduced staffing. We talked about this being an opportunity for technical people to feed common sense into the management systems, which is a different world than the technical. Workplanning in particular was brought up as a management process for which technical staff may not understand the value. We agree that communication between management and technical staff is important when workplanning, particularly with crises driving the work efforts of a staff reduced in numbers.

Everyone spent a few minutes reading through the 6 problem areas to determine whether anything was missing. A couple of items were added. (This will be available after the August 19 meeting.) Mary noted that Al wanted the business processes to drive the program structure. We then put together a list of program activities ([from first page of Mary's notes](#)):

CURRENT PROGRAM BUSINESS PRACTICES. WHAT DOES THE WASTE PROGRAM DO? WHAT ARE ITS ACTIVITIES?

- Review plans for waste facilities
- Inspect businesses: solid waste, hazardous waste, and recycling facilities
- Respond to complaints
- Audit recycling and non-metallic mining facilities
- Provide technical assistance

- Primary and secondary enforcement: discover, investigate, gather data for enforcement
- Secondary response to spills and other disasters
- Educate and provide outreach on solid waste, hazardous waste, and recycling to all
- Track all complaints. Track all inspections
- Management reporting, e.g. time sheets
- Provide direction to subprograms through teams
- Provide policy and guidance direction, also through teams
- License solid waste, hazardous waste, recycling facilities
- Write codes
- Interpret codes
- Provide training internally and externally
- Office support work – typing, filing, etc.

We reviewed some management strategies that AI identified in his August 5 meeting with WCR:

Management by data

Centralized/decentralized

Outsource or in-house

Let go of some functions

Command/Control vs Audit

We decided, as one group, to think about solutions that address 1 or more program inefficiencies and place them within Mary's categories or make up categories as we go.

One person noted that the redesign team needs to be aware of the need to communicate a response to the ideas generated in these meetings. It was felt the (mis)trust issue is based in not seeing results. Others agreed that it was not a problem if ideas were not used but they would like to know that the ideas were at least considered. Mary will provide the redesign team with a method for putting together a responsiveness summary.

These are Mary's notes:

Ideas for Increasing Waste Program Efficiency and Improving the Waste Program

From August 16, 2004 Meeting in Wausau

Organized by various categories of program elements

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- Program goals should drive policy decisions (e.g. the EMS zero waste goal versus the proposed 2000' leachate line rule which would significantly increase the size of landfills)
- Develop guidance for:
 - Low hazardous exemption
 - Self-implementing
 - Self-reporting

STATUTORY CHANGES

- Broaden citation authority in the enforcement process for open burning to streamline the enforcement process.

BUSINESS PROCESSES/PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

- Hydros and engineers plan approvals should be reviewed by hydros and engineers with a statewide perspective (probably located in Central Office)
- Operate Proactively to provide good customer service, e.g. if townships have operated for ten years with no detects, approach them and tell them they can request reducing monitoring rather than waiting for them to call and ask us about it

- Establish “bridges” with legislators as externals have to decrease mistrust and to lead to more balance in legislature’s response
- Put greater focus on external outreach and less on internal process. We get so wrapped up in process, e.g. workplanning, EMS, and team surveys, that we don’t succeed in then following through with the results of those processes. Process ≠ Product. The process shouldn’t be the goal.
- **Increase efficiency of business processes through the use of technology**
 - Make annual report electronic reporting
 - Have electronic report submittals (feasibility, PLOP, Plan modifications)
 - Computerize inspection/audit forms
 - Data collection, consolidation, and application. Good examples: recent list of license facilities/services
 - Coordinate data reporting using a single, state supported system
- **Streamline processes**
 - Look at current reporting required by the program. Look for what data do we really need and use. Then eliminate or reduce the rest. Work with counties on this. Take a hard look at the data we collect and why we are collecting it.
 - Eliminate “needs” in landfill feasibility plan review
 - Provide cookie-cutter approvals. If meet certain criteria, you can do it. Then audit these self approvals, a certain % per year so there is some oversight.
 - Create templates for reports, plan modifications, etc. on the web
 - Streamline inspections for any licensed facility. Have requirement for some periodic (quarterly? Annually?) self-inspections with facilities submitting forms from their self inspections, then audit a certain % annually as a check.
- **Consistency Concerns**
 - Can/should be consistent in the application of policy, but must consider flexibility from facility-to-facility where you must consider site-specific factors
 - Forget about consistency in policy and implementation and think in terms of legality and what state law is. Apply the laws of the state, but how you apply them depends on what and where.
 - Don’t get bogged down in consistency concerns
 - Develop environmental program criteria consistent among DNR programs. Now different programs have different standards for what’s protective
 - Promote consistency in interpreting codes and in regulation
 - Need to be able to recognize and treat differently good, responsible players versus irresponsible players. Need to help public understand that, yes, sometimes we do handle situations differently depending on a business’s history and performance. (see under Training...)
 - Statewide consistency of allocation and work planning (i.e. all regions get same resources) doesn’t make sense. Need to recognize regional difference, both physical differences (i.e. large geographic area requires more travel) and scope, nature and complexity of the businesses in an area. “Equality” of budgets is not real.

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

- Drop EMS. We did it to become familiar with EMS for our work with businesses who do them. We’ve gone through it, so we understand it for the waste program, but some of the results of our EMS don’t make sense. We cannot afford the money or staff for doing the EMS: the benefit we are getting is not sufficient to justify the cost.
- There’s more than one way to achieve desired results when working with the public and businesses. How you handle situations can exacerbate tensions or can keep actions and issues from blowing out of proportion. We need to focus on those that draw less negative attention and help/expect staff to use these more desirable approaches.
- Do not create work to justify management positions. If someone loses a job, they lose a job. Drop the Career Executive Temporary Assignments (CETA).

RELATIONSHIPS

- Work across regional lines. Geographic boundaries are artificial. Cross lines when it makes sense to do a job.
- Each region must look beyond its borders to consider statewide issues when making decisions.
- Trust staff to make sound, intelligent decisions.

STAFFING

- Support staff are necessary. Technical staff members are not typists. Staff could use help with mailing, data entry, typing, information tracking, “failure for fee.” They need program assistants that can assist staff, not who have other jobs and thus do not have time or are not open to helping staff with these other tasks.
- Have program experts.
- Establish/continue research function
- Plan review staff should be physically in the regions if they are assigned there. Move C/D staff into the regions.
- Technical staff in technical positions = job satisfaction
- Develop and maintain an acceptable staff:supervisor ration. For example 7 or 8 to 1. Use trust. Staff can have some independence in their work.
- Reduce the number of regional supervisors and move the resulting saved resources to specialized supervisors/coordinators in the Central Office. Don’t necessarily need 2 supervisors in each region. Reallocate those resources to a centralized technical reviewer.
- Change the signature/review authorities in the waste program if supervision of plan review staff is not in the region.

OTHER RESOURCES

- We need pool cars
- We need alternative funding sources
- Increase program revenue:
 - Charge fees for expedited
 - Charge for construction/demolition waste
 - Charge exempt ton
- Charge for each exemption request

TRAINING, LEARNING, BUILDING EXPERIENCE

- Need ongoing staff training
- Provide money for training: internally 2 times per year, externally as needed per individual to keep up with technology
- Have statewide meetings and training
- Establish a mentor program/system, putting new people with senior staff
- Help to public to understand the need for flexibility in the program (see under Consistency)

STRUCTURE, AKA “THE BOXES”

- Hydros and engineers should be supervised by hydros and engineers
- Have logical sections as a working structure in the Central Office. Have the 3 programs be the 3 sections – solid waste, hazardous waste, recycling – and then have a group of people or team to provide support (info/education, computer, etc.) for all 3 sections
- Get union buy-in to the structure. ~~Currently the union contract says engineers don’t have to leave the Central Office. Get the Unions to agree to let us decentralize them.~~ (The deleted portion is not correct because it is not a union issue. Letters signed by Secretary Meyer allow some staff to remain in Madison as long as they hold their current positions.)
- Reallocation should be continuous and simplified in the Air/Waste Division. Specifically, when a staffing need arises, look internally for hires to the other programs instead of outside the agency, especially if other programs facing down sizing.
- Have a dual career path system, with a technical career ladder. Don’t make technical staff enter management to be promoted

- Create SWAT review team leaders, for landfills and other crises where progress slows or stops. When special problem arises, assign it to a few people to get it done and move on.

ADAPTING

As a general comment, staff felt the “new” design should embrace checks and balances and flexibility. In essence, if the program tries something with this new design, there should be a way to monitor it and, if it isn’t working, to be able to change it down the road.

For the meeting on Thursday, the group suggested the following:

- that Mary should start with the same categories that she gave us,
- that the meeting be more structured to accommodate the expected larger turnout,
- that the group be split into smaller groups for the brainstorming exercise and
- that those groups look at solutions, what to drop, and program inefficiencies.

Someone (Mary?) was going to bring a list of “management terms” for everyone.

It was suggested that, in addition to notifying internal staff, the redesign team should use the e-mail lists of external focus group participants to let them know about updates available on the web.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

[Back to Notes](#)

- **Lack of direction/leadership in individual programs for policy, consistency, and expertise.**
 - Poor communication between CO/region, especially regarding who to contact w/questions or technical support
 - CO structure – need a supervisor for each major program: SW, HW, Recycling – subs under those
 - Reorient sections to directly support teams
- **Lack of consistency, adequate technical peer review, and non-technical management relative to plan review activities.**
 - Need to have technical staff supervised by technical managers
 - Need a central Plan review coordinator
 - Need better supervision of staff, more accountability and review
 - Need centralized technical core to review out-of-ordinary issues
 - All tech plan review should be reviewed by peer for consistency
 - Specialized plan review by subject statewide for consistency/level of service
- **Reorg placed technical staff in positions of administration –**
 - Technical skills of staff are not being fully utilized
- **Review engineers not near area they are serving.**

COMMUNICATION

- **The lack of open communication from management to staff has created animosity.**
 - Staff need to be treated as professionals
 - Managers should communicate with staff in an honest and direct manner
 - Need to foster open communication among staff/mgrs to clarify mgmt's understanding of program operations
- **Lack of open (honest? Direct?) discussion of issues in dealing with issues - both internally and externally.**
 - Need to have open communication and partnering in both internal and external interactions
 - Need to have open communication during review process; get away from command and control
- **Externals complain of lack of consistency between regions and program –makes it difficult to predict interpretation of regulations**
 - Lack of communication between CO/regions and other programs has resulted in issues of consistency
 - Need to resolve battles and differences between programs
- **There has been a tendency within the program to listen to the squeaky wheel and not listen to the concerns of all partners (internal and external) equally before making decisions.**
 - Need to listen to ALL customers – not just squeaky wheel
- **Cutbacks in outreach to partners (I&E programs) is a great loss.**
 - This was a service that was well received and very helpful to the program.
 - Need more outreach to regulated community as was done in past

PROGRAM MANAGING/MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Accountability-mgrs don't hold staff accountable
- ◆ Mgrs reluctant to rely on staff expertise and experience
- ◆ Appearance that staff input does not count
- ◆ Consistency not what it should be
- ◆ Varying philosophies – conservatives vs. progressives.
- ◆ Technology not used to extent it should be.
- ◆ Need to look at issues on macro level – consider quality of life, business health
- ◆ Predictability / consistency important for customers
- ◆ Poor internal communication (external comment)
- ◆ Funding – enough & right sources important.
- ◆ Industry wants to share technology – DNR not responsive due to staffing/funding issues.
- ◆ Command & control alive & well in Madison/regions more progressive.
- ◆ Reactive vs. proactive.
- ◆ Participative management style important.
- ◆ Need for management to reconnect w/staff.
- ◆ Look at broader perspectives.
- ◆ Waste Program too process oriented
- ◆ Laws should drive program.
- ◆ Practical workload mgmt affected by things like EMS.

TRUST

- ❖ Need for top mgmt to gain trust of staff
- ❖ Central office vs. regional power struggle
- ❖ Open communication necessary
- ❖ Partnerships are important – not command and control
- ❖ Giving in to industry seems to be big part of this exercise
- ❖ Decisions should be made on defined/directed program direction/goals/mission.
- ❖ Staff involvement in decision-making uncertain
- ❖ Feeling of outcomes being pre-decided.
- ❖ Stakeholders not empowered
- ❖ Concerned that input from internal won't be given same consideration as from externals
- ❖ Political pressure will impact decision-making.

PROCESS

✓ **Need to maintain a program that protects environment**

- Don't lose sight of general public
- Begin w/measured responses to industry – don't give away the environment
- Do not allow things prohibited by state law.
- Support program goals

✓ **Trust industry to do what is right for environment.**

- Reward good stewardship-less regulatory
- Allow/encourage innovation w/protection of environment-new technologies
- Lighten degree of review – redundancies.

✓ **Streamline and improve our internal processes**

- Do internal technical reviews to ensure consistency
- Identify where legislative change is needed
- Focus on bad actors-don't look for problems
- Keep timelines – reduce costs to business
- Coordinate w/ other program.
- Don't get bogged down in department complexity.

FUNDING/STAFFING

✓ **Concerns related to staffing levels and technical training**

- Supervisor to staff ratio is high (reduce number of supervisors)
- People are key to success – need to support, train and hold accountable
 - Staff and industry are concerned there are not enough staff to do all the work
 - Staff and Industry feel there is not enough staff training – need to maintain staff level of technical professionalism found in industry
 - Need to establish a career ladder that recognizes expertise, productivity, etc
- Technical supervision of staff needs to be improved
- Professional staff need to be assigned to professional positions, not administrative duties
- Need support staff
- Fear of change –to overcome this need investment of time and effort.
- Foster “support” mechanisms among staff

✓ **Concerns with the program budget**

- Complete review w/budget cuts; define what can be dropped & stop trying to salvage everything.
- Need to retain solid funding for travel and training
- Need more independent source of revenue that is not reliant on one industry and their needs
- Adopt a legislator

✓ **Decentralization vs Centralization:**

- Decentralization working well – external comment.
- Decentralization hampered communication-peer exchange – external comment.
- Need centralized technical core to help w/consistency issues – internal comment.

Waste Management Program Redesign for the Future

Problem: Waste Management Program resources have been downsized with no loss of program content

Goal: Consolidate management in response to reduced resources
Streamline core functions in the program
Respond quickly to future changes

Mission:

The Waste Management Program in partnership with the public, industry and other government agencies, protects public health and the environment by encouraging:

- recycling, waste minimization and pollution prevention;
- proper management of solid and hazardous wastes and mining activities
- voluntary compliance and participation in preferred waste management practices by providing a balance of technical assistance and compliance assurance activities.

We assure program integration, regulatory consistency and good customer service through close coordination and communication among program staff and with related programs and agencies.

Redesign Criteria

These criteria will be used to evaluate recommendations and issues as the program resign effort unfolds

1. Streamline program functions and organization
2. Program is adaptive, progressive and collaborative
3. Work and initiatives ensure funding stability for the program
4. Work/initiatives direct resources to activities that effect the greatest public health and environmental benefit/impact
5. Addresses the concerns of stakeholders (both internal and external, staff and management, private and public interests)

